

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

DOCTRINE

OF AN

Intermediate State.

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BETWEEN
DEATH *and the* RESURRECTION:

WITH SOME
REMARKS on the Rev. Mr. GODDARD'S
Sermon on that Subject.

By PETER PECKARD, A. M. *RP*
Late Fellow of C. C. College, Oxford.

L O N D O N :

Printed for L. DAVIS and C. REYMERS, over-against
Gray's-Inn-Gate, Holborn; and W. OWEN, near
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It hath been for a long time considered as an absolute Verity, that there is in Man a natural Principle of immortal Life. The Philosophers, the Orators, the Poets, the Divines, in the several successive Ages of the World, have generally taken this for granted. This was of great Service to them in many respects; and they have not failed to inculcate it as an indubitable

bitable Maxim. And it may now perhaps be thought an unpardonable Presumption to question the Stability of that Foundation, which hath lain so long unmoved; and on which so many extraordinary Structures have been raised by the great Men, both of antient and of modern Times. But it must be allowed, that nothing hath proved a greater Impediment to the Progress of Knowledge, than this Method of laying down fundamental Maxims, before either their Evidence hath been duly weighed, or their Tendency properly examined.

The peculiar Worth of the Christian Institution, is the establishing, upon sure and certain Grounds, the Doctrine of a future State; the revealing and bringing to Light that Life and Immortality which before lay concealed in Darkness. The Deductions of Pagan Philosophy, founded on the Supposition of a natural Principle of Immortality, at best could lead but to imperfect Conjectures. And it is remarkable, that one of the first Men in the Gentile World, after composing the sublimest Treatises, and setting

ting all the Philosophical Reasonings in their full Force, doth yet confess to his Friend the Doubts and Dissatisfactions of his own Mind, upon this important Subject.

The Doctrine of a future State, established upon the Principles of Christianity, is the impregnable Fortrefs of Truth; but the injudicious Defence of this Doctrine, by metaphysical Reasonings, and too refined Distinctions, hath greatly weakened the Christian Support of it. By adhering to this, we shall find that our immortal Life is procured for us by Jesus Christ, and by Him alone: But if we insist upon a natural Principle of Immortality, we leave indeed very little to be performed for us by Jesus Christ; we desert our strong Holds, and fly to those Places for Security, which are by no means tenable; for the metaphysical Arguments upon this Subject are not of that Force, which will stand the Test of an impartial Examination.

It may be proper to observe here, once for all, that the Denial of a natural Prin-

ciple of Immortality doth not at all affect the Scriptural, the Christian Doctrine of a future State: For the Scripture doth not anywhere assure us of the Truth of this Doctrine, from such natural Principle; but from the Redemption by Jesus Christ, and from that alone: Nay, the Scripture expressly asserteth the Mortality of Man, and the Restoration to Life, from that Mortality, by the same Jesus Christ. The important Doctrine of a future State then standeth firm upon its own proper Foundation, notwithstanding a natural Principle of Immortality be disallowed. He that buildeth his Hopes of future Existence upon this Foundation, is like the foolish Man who built his House upon the Sand; but he who taketh the Authority of Christ, and will abide by that, is like the wise Man, who laid his Foundation upon a Rock.

The Scripture then being our only Authority upon this Point, all that can be produced from any other Quarter, except it be defensible by Scripture Authority, is not to be considered as being of any Weight; and

all the learned Arguments drawn from the abstract Nature of the Soul, from arbitrary Negations with regard to the Powers of Matter, and from ontological Distinctions among the several Sorts of Souls and Substances, are manifestly vain and inconclusive. The whole Process of such Arguments is denied, as being derived from Premises which are of no Authority, which are not granted, and which cannot be proved. To Scripture we tie down our Opponents; by That will we be determined, and by That only.

Now, as the Doctrine of an intermediate State of Sensibility between Death and the Resurrection, is derived from the Supposition of a natural inherent Principle of Immortality, if that Supposition be false, this Doctrine cannot be true. And as nothing is allowed to be proper Authority upon this Subject, but the Scripture, the Doctrine of an intermediate State must stand or fall by that Authority; the Weight and Tendency of which hath lately been laid before the Public,

Public, in a very fair and ingenuous manner.

The incomparable Discourse upon the Nature and End of Death, and the noble Collection of scriptural Passages, brought together in the Appendix, all stated with Precision, and, where an Explanation was deemed necessary, explained with Candour, gave unprejudiced Men the pleasing, but deceitful, Hope, that every Well-wisher to the Christian Institution had received full Satisfaction upon the Doctrine there maintained. And as every Attempt to remove foreign Difficulties from our divine and most perfect System of Religion, is, before all other human Labors, intitled to the Gratitude of Mankind, it is a painful Disappointment to find that this truly valuable and most important Undertaking, instead of the Praises which it most justly deserveth, is treated with disingenuous Censure, and unwarrantable Suspensions.

The Reverend Author of a late Discourse, in favor of an intermediate State of Sensibility

bility between Death and the Resurrection, will excuse me for taking the same public Method to defend, which he hath taken to defame, this most valuable Performance. It is not, indeed, intended at present to write a regular and particular Defence, nor to give a formal Answer to this Discourse; nor yet to draw up an elaborate Treatise upon this important Subject: This would require a large Volume, and will, I hope, be executed by a Person perfectly qualified for a Work of such momentous Consequence. All that is now designed, is to lay before the Reader a short, but impartial, Account of the Rise and Progress of this Opinion; to state the Nature of the Question in Dispute; and to give a concise Sketch of some of the principal Consequences attending it, and its Opposite; and this with a View only to prevent any future Nibbling at an obscure or controverted Passage, in Opposition to the general Stream, and full Force, of Scripture Authority. The Misfortune of falling into this minute kind of Labor, is chiefly owing to a wrong Method of interpreting the Scripture Phrase, by adhering too closely to the Letter,

Letter, which, in this Sense also, *killeth*; and rejecting that free, popular Spirit, which animateth the Language, and giveth the true Sense of Sacred Writ. And what can we expect from the Wire-drawing of figurative Expressions, and attending grammatically to Modes of Speech, plainly founded on vulgar Prejudices? What must be the Consequence of considering bold Eastern Phrases in a literal Sense, and logical Way of reasoning? If we are determined, at all Events, to confine and adapt these Things to our Systems of Philosophy, what can be expected, but endless Mistakes and unmeaning Perplexity?

The Reverend Author, whom I have more particularly in View, doth allow, that in the Primitive Church there were a few who maintained the Doctrine of Man's entire Mortality. And it is to be observed, that not only a few maintained it, but it may be supposed to have been the general, the orthodox Opinion; since the contrary was never heard of as a Church Doctrine, till the Fourth Century. And every one that

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is at all acquainted with Ecclesiastical History, must know what a fatal Revolution was then made in the System of Christianity. It was then found out, in express Contradiction to our Saviour's Assertion, that the Kingdom of Christ was a Kingdom of this World. Temporal Wealth, tyrannic Sway, and eastern Luxury, succeeded to the primitive Humility, and unadorned Simplicity, of the Gospel. *Plato's* sublime Raptures soon followed *, whose Principles had been frequently maintained by several Christians, and took Place of the plain and simple Doctrines of our Saviour, and his holy Apostles.

Then flowed in the Tide of abominable Corruptions; and, with the rest, the Doctrine of Dæmons, and an intermediate State. Churchmen were then indeed *Kings*, set apart from the rest of Mankind, and exalted far above them. The honest *Greeks*, by politic Institution, spoke funeral Orations, in

* This is very evident, from the Doctrines of the Gnostics in general; and in particular from the Tenets of the *Valentinians*.

Honor of their Heroes, who bravely fought, and greatly died. And now, in Imitation of this Custom, the Idea of Greatness being annexed to violent Churchmen, they also must have their funeral Orations. Hence, in applying to the Passions of the People, and pursuing a flighty Strain of studied Oratory, the Speaker addressed himself to the Deceased, as being still conscious of the Honors paid to his earthy Remains. Afterwards, by degrees, crept in the Notion, that as the Deceased was conscious of the Transactions in this World, he would also, upon proper Application, be propitious: The Invocation and Adoration of the Dead, the worshipping a Stone, or Log of Wood, was the Consequence: And whoever will carefully peruse the History of those unnatural Diffensions, those relentless Persecutions, and bloody Massacres, occasioned by the Disputes relating to Image-worship, may be tolerably acquainted with some of the blessed Effects attending the Doctrine of a separate Existence.

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As in the Pagan Institutions, the People thought their Heroes to be immediately changed into protecting Demi-gods, so in the Christian Church, by virtue of these funeral Harangues, calculated to flatter the Prejudices of the People, holy Men, and sometimes Men unholy, were at once exalted to the Dignity of Saints. This was no small Satisfaction to the Circle of weeping Friends, and a very substantial Comfort to the Priest, by whom the Apotheosis was performed. The Advantages that would arise from this Trade were very easily seen, and so the Belief of a separate Existence became in Time a positive Article of Church Doctrine. Our funeral Sermons too, to this Day, are generally so managed, as to continue the same Prejudice. Every tender Mother, or disconsolate Widow, is taught to sooth her Grief, by reflecting that her Infant is immediately changed into a round-faced Cherub, with curling Locks; or her Husband into a Guardian Angel, with a large Pair of expanded Wings.

And all these idle Notions were originally derived from that Part of the *Greek Philosophy* which first taught the Doctrine of incorporeal Substances, with which Christianity hath really no more to do than with the *Pythagorean* Doctrine of their Transmigration. This Notion of incorporeal Substances was at first advanced with a very good Design; with a Design to demonstrate the Impiety of the antient Atheists; whose Opinion was, "That all the World is corporeal; that there is no Existence but Body." *Διχυρίζονται τὸ εἶναι μόνον τὸ παρὰ τὴν φύσιν—Plato.* They assert strenuously, that that alone hath Existence which can be felt. *Ἐν τῷ παντί, καὶ μίαν εἶναι τινὰ φύσιν ὡς ὑλὴν τιθεασί, καὶ ταύτην σωματικὴν, καὶ μέγεθος ἔχουσαν.* They lay it down, that all the Universe is One; and that there is but One only Nature as the *Substratum* of all Things; and that this is corporeal, and hath Magnitude. *Arist. Metaph.* The Consequence of this, was the Denial of a Supreme Incorporeal Deity. In order to confute which impious Opinion, the Deists of antient Times took great Pains to prove, that

that there was a Nature which had not Magnitude, and consequently that the Doctrine of the Atheists was false. And with this Conclusion Aristotle endeth one of his Treatises.—Φανερόν ὅτι ἀδύνατον τὸ πρῶτον κινεῖν καὶ ἀκίνητον εἶναι τι μέγεθος—ὅτι ἀδιαίρετον ἐστὶ καὶ ἀμέρες, καὶ ὅθεν ἔχον μέγεθος. It is impossible that the First Mover should have Magnitude—it is evident, that he is indivisible, without Parts, and every kind of Magnitude: And having thus established the Existence of a Supreme Immaterial Being, in Opposition to the Impieties of the Atheists, they presently came to apply these metaphysical Arguments, concerning the Supreme Deity, to other Subjects, and particularly to the human Mind. For, plainly perceiving a manifest Difference between the mental Operations, and those gross material Beings, which are subject to our Senses, they concluded, perhaps too hastily, the Impossibility of all Connection of Mind with Materiality: And from hence asserted, *Ἀδιαίρετον πᾶν τὸ μὴ ὕλην ἔχον, ὡς περὶ ὁ ἀνθρώπινος νῦς.* Every thing immaterial, such as the human Mind, is indivisible.

Arist. Metaph.

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The human Mind therefore being, by this System of Metaphysics, proved immaterial, and indivisible, is not capable of Destruction, and consequently cannot cease to exist. But it was still very plain, that the human Body did, at a certain Period, cease to continue such, and was dissolved by Corruption, or reduced by Fire to Ashes. How then is this incorruptible Mind to be disposed of? It is, at all Events, to go into *Hades*: But *Hades* being supposed to be a Place, a Receptacle under-ground, and this incorruptible Mind, from the Qualities already bestowed upon it, not having any Relation to Place, the Difficulty remaineth, how we are to get this incorruptible Mind into *Hades*. As then a natural Principle of Immortality had been arbitrarily asserted, to answer one Purpose, so now a proper kind of Body is to be created, which at once shall solve this Difficulty. An Idol of the Soul, εἰδωλον, as it is called by *Plotinus*; which is supposed to signify an airy or spirituous Body, quickened and vitalized by the Soul immediately after Death. And the Soul, notwithstanding its Immo-
bility,

bility, may be said to go into *Hades*, because when it quitteth this gross and earthly Body, one more spirituous and subtle, collected from the Spheres or Elements, doth still accompany it. Εξελθουσα γαρ αυτη τε σφαιρας σωματος, το πνευμα συνομαρτει, ο εκ των σφαιρων συνελεξατο. *Parphyr.*

The Doctrine contained in this Philosophy amounted to this, " That the human
 " Soul doth not only exercise its rational
 " Powers, but also its sensitive and irrational
 " Faculties, in the State of *Death*; which
 " it could not do, were it not then *Vitally*
 " united to some Body which is spirituous
 " and airy; and that the Soul, immediately
 " after *Death*, is united to such a spirituous
 " Body, is to be proved from the Phæno-
 " menon of Spectres seen about Graves and
 " Sepulchres, and haunting their former
 " Habitations," *V. Philop. Pr. to Arist. de An.* This seemeth to be a Proof admirably well suited to the Doctrine it is intended to support; both being derived from the Ignorance, the Superstition, and the Prejudices of Mankind.

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And now, according to the Nature and Quality of the particular Soul for which they were in this manner to provide, they had ready, upon occasion, a *σωμα λεπτομερες, σωμα πνευματικον, σωμα αστροειδες, σωμα θρανιον, σωμα αιθεριον*, a subtle, a spiritual, a lucid or star-like, a heavenly or etherial Body. These two kinds of Bodies, the earthy, and the philosophical, were considered as a sort of double Vesture to the Soul; one of which, the gross, earthly Body, or the outward Garment, was put off at Death; and the other always accompanied the Soul whithersoever it went, *το πνευμα συνομαρτει*: So that notwithstanding all their whimsical Fancies concerning the Nature of the State of Death, notwithstanding they were so extravagant as to represent it as a Species of exalted Life; yet they never were so very extravagant, as to suppose what we mean by a separate intermediate State, a perceptive rational Soul, in strict Propriety of Speech, existing separate from, and acting independently of, its Body.

St. *Paul*, indeed, doth make mention of two kinds of Body, Natural and Spiritual; he also speaketh of being unclothed, and clothed upon. It is well known, that St. *Paul* was deeply versed in philosophic Wisdom. Possibly, therefore, these Expressions may have reference to the philosophic Notions, and be derived from that System of scholastic Wisdom, in which he was educated. However this be, these Expressions have not any thing to do with an Intermediate State; since the Term Spiritual is relative to our Condition after the universal Resurrection of the Dead.

The antient Philosophers, who were the most strenuous Asserters of the natural Immortality of the Soul, did nevertheless suppose that it was always joined to some proper kind of Body. A naked human Soul, separate from, and independent of, all Body, was a thing they had not any Conception of; but have written much, and purposely, against it. See *Aristot. de An.* And indeed, both Reason and Scripture plainly show,

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that

that however mistaken they might be in many of their Notions, and in their particular Application of this Doctrine, yet that in the main their Supposition, that the human Faculties do not exist without the Body, is true.

From this short and imperfect Account of the Rise of this Opinion, and the manner it was introduced amongst the Christians, we may see that the Doctrine concerning an Intermediate State of Sensibility is taken originally from the Subtleties and Confusion of *Greek Philosophy*, first mingled with Christianity, perhaps without any bad Design; but afterwards continued, and made an Article of Church Doctrine, with mean and lucrative Views; Views utterly destructive of the System laid down by Jesus Christ; as will appear more plainly from a short Sketch of some of its necessary Consequences.

And first, as the proper Notion of Death was now banished, by establishing a natural Principle of Life; and as it is very plain,
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and beyond all Dispute, that Jesus Christ came into the World on purpose to redeem Men from Death, and to give them Life and Immortality, it is very certain that he could not redeem them from that State in which they were not, nor give them that Life and Immortality of which they were already possessed: So that, by this Scheme, the whole Notion of Redemption by Jesus Christ is absolutely and entirely destroyed. What then was to be done? It was too glaring an Absurdity, for the Churchmen to preach Redemption by Jesus Christ, and yet assert a Doctrine, which contradicted the very Notion of Redemption. With the Help of a little scholastic Subtlety, they invented a moral and metaphorical Death, under the Name of Original Sin; constituting all the Sons of *Adam* the Children of divine Wrath, and putting them in a State of eternal Damnation; which was to be substituted in the Place of natural Death, to be made the Object of Redemption, and done away by Baptism: A Doctrine, which, when traced to all its Consequences, must make every rational and good Man shudder! but concern-

ing which there are sufficient Reasons for saying no more at present.

Another Consequence derived from the Opinion of an Intermediate State of Sensibility, is the loading the Notion of Death, in itself very plain, simple, and intelligible, with insuperable Contradictions, and destroying all the Evidence of Sense, and common Principles of Reason: For they who maintain this Opinion, are driven also to make these Assertions, " That they who *are said to be* dead, " are dead only unto *Men here upon Earth,* " but not dead to themselves." " That " their *Life* is not extinct, but disappeareth " only to us." " That they are neither " dead nor asleep, but still alive and awake." Now what kind of Death that is, in which Men are neither dead nor asleep, but still alive and awake, in which their *Life* or Personality is not extinct, but a spiritualized Body is *vitally* united with a percipient and active Soul, for my own part I cannot possibly conceive. That all these Assertions are maintained by the Propagators of this Opinion, can be sufficiently proved, whenever there shall

shall be Occasion. I shall forbear all Remarks upon these Passages, that I may neither be thought guilty of Insult to the Dead, or Offence to the Living; but must take the Liberty to say, That there is not a stronger Contradiction in the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, than in the Doctrine of such a kind of Death, as includeth Perception and Consciousness.

Another Consequence from this Doctrine, is the taking all Force from the Arguments produced by our Saviour, in favour of an universal Resurrection, and future Day of Judgment; and not only the taking away all Force from them, but making them quite ridiculous and foreign to his Purpose. Such is the Case of the whole Parable of *Dives* and *Lazarus*, and the Passage relative to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, That God is not the God of the Dead, but the Living; and others. The First, according to Dr. *Law*'s most judicious Explication of it, is nothing more than a general scenical Description of a future State after Judgment, not an Intermediate State before it,

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accommodated to the common Prejudices of the Vulgar: For if this Fable be applicable to an Intermediate State, the Rewards or Punishments of this State are not capable of Encrease at the Day of Judgment; because the Bosom of *Abraham*, and a deep Hole burning with material Fire, were Terms suited to the Notions of the *Jews*, and intended to express the utmost Degree of Happiness and Misery. If then this utmost Degree is to be found in the State of Death, and this Parable was intended to be an Illustration of such a Supposition; the Doctrine of a Resurrection, Judgment, and consequent Rewards and Punishments, is not only not supported by this Argument, but superseded by it, and made wholly impertinent. To say nothing of the many palpable Absurdities that must necessarily follow the Supposition, that this Parable was intended as a literal Proof of an Intermediate State,—such as the Man's being in the Body, and out of the Body at the same Time—his being in the Grave, and at the same Time his not being there, but in the Torments of Hell—the Inconsistency of a real material Body,

with

with its natural Members, Eyes, Tongue, &c. unconsumed by real material Fire. If then this Fable is to be taken literally, it is loaded with many Inconsistencies; if it is to be taken as descriptive of an Intermediate State, it is not a Proof of what our Saviour intended it should prove; but if taken in the popular Sense, and according to Dr. Law's Explanation of it, it is very pertinent to the Purpose intended by it, and a beautiful Illustration of the Connection of Vice and Virtue in this Life, respectively with Happiness and Misery in the Life to come.

As to the other Passage relative to *Abraham, &c.* it is manifestly made use of by our Saviour, as a Proof of a future Resurrection; and if it be applied to the Purpose of establishing an Intermediate State, our Saviour's Argument is also in this Instance entirely destroyed; since in that respect God is indeed not the God of the Dead, but of such as are *really* alive both to him and to themselves. And there is, besides this, a farther bad Consequence; that there must of necessity

necessity be implied, the Resurrection of the very same Body which was laid in the Grave; because by this Supposition the Soul is already properly alive; and as there must be a Restoration of something to Life from Death; consequently, of nothing but the Body: And how will this agree with the express Doctrine, that the same Body shall not be raised again? *Thou sowest not that Body that shall be, but another.* The Christian Doctrine upon this Point is manifestly the Revivification, Resuscitation of the *whole Man*, Person, conscious Being, whatever it be that constituteth Consciousness, that was asleep and dead; not of any particular Part of his Composition, and particularly not his gross Body. Besides, according to this metaphysical Distinction of Soul and Body, where is the Consistency of sleeping, dying, awaking, being restored to Life, when applied to the Body, which is merely the Instrument of a Soul, feeling and acting in and through it? But all these Difficulties will easily be removed, by an impartial Examination of what is advanced in the Appendix
upon

upon this, and the parallel Passages in Scripture *.

* The ingenious and learned Dr. Sykes, by retaining some of the common Prejudices, in relation to the metaphorical Nature of the human Soul, which Dr. Clarke himself gave up before his Death, seemeth to have confounded all the Benefits procured for us by the new Covenant; and reduceth them so low, as to make them not deserving the Apparatus of it, nor in any respect worthy its Author. Thus the *bringing Life and Immortality to Light*, is, according to him, only throwing Light upon that Doctrine with which the World was well acquainted before. And the *Grace reigning thro' Righteousness unto eternal Life*, meaneth only the continuing in Existence and Sensibility to that Age when all shall give an Account of their particular Actions. Which Sensibility they only shall enjoy, who believe in Christ; and all others die the proper Death of *ceasing to think and act*. See Script. Doctr. of Redemp. passim. If this be the Case; First, What becomes of the natural Immortality? Secondly, How can it be consistent with the Doctrine of our Lord, and his Apostle St. Paul, who oppose *perishing*, or *being lost*, to a Resurrection? John vi. 39. 1 Cor. xv. 18. 32, &c. &c. He shall not *perish*, but, &c. &c.—Then they who are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. And, Thirdly, What is the great Benefit of that Resurrection, on which the Scriptures lay so great a Stress, and make the grand Object of our Faith and Hope? (See the Appendix, Sect. 11.) which, according to this ingenious Author, is not really a *Reviviscence*, but only a Re-union of the Soul and Body, or the Man's *appearing and acting again as he did before in this Life*. Ibid. p. 366.

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Another bad Consequence from this Doctrine of an Intermediate State, is the inverting the natural and rational Order of Things, and making the Supreme Judge of the World proceed with less Wisdom and Congruity than any human Judicature. It is setting Punishment before Judgment, or else repeating one Judgment after another, for the same Transactions. For these Persons, who are not entirely dead, in their State of Death must be supposed to have Perception and Consciousness, else they are in a poor Condition indeed: And if they have these Faculties, they must know whether they are happy or miserable. And as they must be conscious, that they are in that State of Existence which is posterior to human Life, they must also be conscious, that their final and irreversibile Doom is already decreed. So that either these Men are punished or rewarded *before* Judgment; which is absurd; or else the great Christian Doctrine of a particular future Time of Judgment, to take place at once with all Men universally, is by this Opinion entirely overturned.

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Another Consequence is, the furnishing both the Papist and the Deist with Arms against ourselves. And these two Sets of Men are the only formidable Enemies to Christianity; for the Atheist being a wild and outrageous Enemy to Mankind in general, not in particular to Christianity, is so very extravagantly absurd, that his own Folly is a sufficient Answer to his Impiety: But with regard to the Papist, he could do nothing at all without this fundamental Doctrine of an Intermediate State. An honest Papist will confess, if you deny an Intermediate State, there will be an End of our Worship, even of the *Virgin Mary*. And indeed the whole Popish Doctrine of Purgatory, Masses for the Dead, Adoration of Saints, Worship of Images, *Limbus Patrum*, *Infantum*, and all the senseless Trumpery that doth any way belong to these monstrous Tenets, is entirely founded upon this Doctrine of an Intermediate State, and upon this only. And if this Doctrine, which is contrary both to Reason and to Scripture, were once fairly given up, the whole Business of

Popery must absolutely very soon be demolished Root and Branch.

With regard to the Deists, some of the principal of that Tribe have taken a Step to destroy Christianity, which hath destroyed themselves. These Men finding that a natural Principle of Immortality was strenuously asserted by those who are called Orthodox, and taking it for granted, without knowing any thing of the matter, that this was really the Doctrine of Christ, attacked this Notion with all their Force; hoping thereby to demolish the whole Scheme of Christianity: And accordingly they have taken great Pains to prove, from the Circumstances of the human Constitution, from Matters of Fact, and rational Arguments, that Man is naturally mortal. And I believe I may say, they have advanced some things, which no Christian can answer. What now is the Consequence of this Proceeding? They have absolutely destroyed all Proof of a happy Immortality, exclusively of the Redemption by Jesus Christ. They have digged a Pit for others, and are fallen into

into the midst of it themselves. Shall we then pull them out of their Mire, and set them upon the same Ground with ourselves, only to enable them to cut our own Throats? Let every thing be done for them that can be done, in Charity and Truth; but let us not establish Deism upon the Ruins of Christianity. Let us not labor for a natural Principle of Immortality, which can only serve to make the Deist, with respect to a happy future State, entirely independent of the Christian Institution.

Another very bad Consequence of this Doctrine is, the setting the Scripture in such a Light, as to make it inconsistent with, and contradictory to, itself. And this is a Point of infinite Importance to Christianity to be set right; for the Scriptures are the only proper Authority for Christianity. And if this Authority is found to be full of direct Contradictions, what will Unbelievers, or what can even Believers, say of the System itself? And so long as the Doctrine of an Intermediate State is made a necessary Article of Faith, it is utterly impossible to free
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the Scriptures from many evident Inconsistencies; as may be seen at large in the Appendix.

The partial Resurrection and Revivification, which is necessarily maintained by the Favourers of an Intermediate State, doth also, in their own Sense, reduce the Doctrine of Christ's Redemption very low, and give up all that is peculiarly noble, and most valuable in Christianity; a total and entire Revivification and Resurrection to eternal Life. For according to this Notion, the Body only is to be raised again; that Body which is always considered by these People as a Clog, a Chain, an Impediment. Death is also said by them to be the Riddance from this Burthen, when the nimble Soul can slide upon a Sun-beam, or float at pleasure thro' the Regions of Heaven. What! Shall then the Son of God divest himself of his Divinity, and subject himself to all the Miseries of human Life, in order that we, after Death, may again be? — What! Loaded with an unnecessary Incumbrance? And if we suppose the Resurrection-Body to be ever so much

much spiritualized, yet if it be a Body, it is not a Spirit, if there be any Meaning in Words ; and consequently, according to these metaphysical Refinements, cannot be so airy and free as that pure, separate, and naked Spirit, which is supposed to exist entirely and independently of all Body : So that upon this Hypothesis, a Resurrection is indeed a Disadvantage.

According to this System too, there are innumerable Difficulties arising from the supposed abstract Nature of the Soul, which cannot possibly be reconciled either to Matters of Fact, or Reasons of Philosophy ; and particularly the Interruption of Consciousness : For in a Being which is supposed to be eternally conscious, one single Moment's sound Sleep is a Stumbling-block never to be got over. I say, sound Sleep ; because the Circumstance of Dreaming is an Effect of disturbed and imperfect Sleep ; an Effect as strictly mechanical as any other Circumstance relative to the human Constitution ; notwithstanding what the fertile Invention of some fanciful Men may have produced

upon this Subject. This Assertion can easily be demonstrated by those who are acquainted with the Structure of the human Body, and the Laws of the Animal Oeconomy. All the Arguments, therefore, from this Circumstance, to prove a separate Action of the human Soul, are inconclusive, and proceed from an Ignorance of the true Cause of Dreams; which indeed may prove a material and mechanical Operation; but cannot contribute any thing to the Supposition, that they proceed from a separate original Activity of the Soul itself.

And there are other Arguments, which seem to prove an Interruption of Consciousness, in a stronger manner than even sound Sleep; such as some Cases of Extasy, or Swooning; and several Instances of Violence to the Brain: For in Sleep the secretory and vital Powers remain, and several of the natural Functions are regularly performed; but frequently in the other Cases all the Faculties, and all the Functions, seem, for the Time, to be destroyed; the Limbs become lifeless, Perception is gone, Respiration at
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an End, and the vital Circulation stopped; a most exact Resemblance of Death! in which there really is not any thing more, except a longer Duration of these same Effects, and the natural Consequences attending it. Which longer Duration to the Dead is absolutely nothing. The momentary Continuance of a Swoon is precisely the same as the whole Term of our Continuance in the State of Death: For were we to remain Millions of Ages in this State, yet these being passed without Ideas or Perception, will appear literally and strictly but a Term of momentary Duration; so that the last conscious Act of mortal Life, and that which beginneth our Life of Immortality, will be as intimately connected together as any Two Moments in our Existence, that have passed in close and immediate Succession. And as the Cessation of Consciousness will thus annihilate the Term of Death, our Life, at the Resurrection, will appear one entire, continued, and uninterrupted Existence. The Interval of Death will be but the Track of an Arrow thro' the Air; it doth indeed divide our Existence; but the divided Parts are instantly closed together, and all is perfect

fect and complete: But upon the other Supposition, of the Soul's separate Activity, there really is no End of the Difficulties and Confusion arising from it: And there are many certain Facts, which indisputably prove that Cessation of Consciousness, which is here asserted, and also that this Cessation doth, to all Intents and Purposes, annihilate that Portion of Time, which passeth in a State of Insensibility. Let us then no longer insist upon those Doctrines, which are obscure, perplexed, incapable of Proof, nor reject the opposite, which are easy and intelligible, and admit of rational, satisfactory Evidence; for this way all Difficulties will be at once removed; Christianity will be set in a more clear and amiable Light, and no Shadow of rational Objection to it can remain. Let us then honestly lay aside our antient Prejudices, and build our Faith in this Point on the Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone.

If we consider this Subject in the way of Reason, can any thing possibly be conceived more void of Understanding, and every

every Degree of Perception, than a dead MAN? It is to no purpose to fly to metaphysical Subtleties, in a plain Matter of Fact; for all that can be meant by the Word *Soul*, is, that which giveth Life and Sensibility, and without which, a Man hath not the Power of Perception and Conscioufness. Now, if after Death these Faculties remain, how can the Man be said to be truly dead? Will any one give that Title to a Person who is conscious of his own Existence, and hath both Perception and Reflection? What then is Life? Sensibility is the essential Property of Life; Insensibility of the contrary. And if there be Sensibility in Death, there is no such Thing as a Contradiction in Nature. Metaphysical Distinctions upon the separate Parts of Man's Composition, are here not to be admitted, which were at first fancied without Foundation, and asserted with dogmatical Arrogance, then arbitrarily supported from lucrative Views, and are now maintained without any proper Authority.

It is readily confessed, that there are some few Passages in Scripture, which are not

the clearest, nor the easiest, to be understood, where, in the way of Fable, or Parable, or poetical Allusion, or sometimes from *Application* to the common Forms of Speaking, public Opinions, established Prejudices, and popular Ignorance, the Expressions may, with some Refinement, be represented as meaning a State of Sensibility by the State of Death. But let any candid and impartial Man determine the Method to be followed in this Enquiry. Must we distort the Meaning of a great Number of very plain Passages in Scripture, and turn them from their natural Sense? And those which are so very express, that their Meaning cannot be refined away, and so strong, that they cannot be distorted, must we leave these in such a manner, that the Scripture shall be full of Contradictions? And shall we do all this, in order to support an ill-founded Meaning, given by Force and Fancy to some other Passages, but few in Number, and which, from the Causes just mentioned, are loaded with Obscurity? Or shall we consider these few parabolical Passages in an Acceptation different indeed from the traditional,

ditional, but yet in a Sense which they will bear, without any Force; and by this means bring the whole Scripture to a perfect Uniformity of Doctrine, consistent with the improved Opinions of Mankind, and the impartial Deductions of Reason and sound Philosophy? Shall the clear Parts be explained by the obscure? Or shall these give way, and be explained by those which cannot be mistaken? That this last is the rational Method, will doubtless be allowed; and then we may venture to pronounce, upon the Authority of Scripture, as well as Reason, that the State of Death is a State of utter Insensibility. And if we can persuade ourselves to believe, what is really the Truth, that the Redemption by Christ is a Redemption from this Death, we shall have no occasion for that indigestible Doctrine of original Depravity, and its dreadful Consequences. We shall remove from Christianity that Rock of Offence, the divine Imputation of moral Guilt, and eternal Damnation, to Non-existence; nay, what is worse, to moral Innocence: And if we take Man as he really is, a conscious Being, or Person whose Identity dependeth upon, and is in truth nothing

thing else but, personal Consciousness continued; and if we resolve, with all Humility, the Faculties of Perception, Thought, and Will, into the Power of God, without running into unintelligible Distinctions, we shall avoid all the Difficulties attending the Supposition of a separate immaterial Principle, which is naturally immortal. If we will not do this, I will venture to say, that some rational Objections may be brought from Sensation and muscular Motion, which are utterly inexplicable, and must throw the wise and regular Dispensations of Providence into the utmost Confusion. What! Can we not be contented, that we are in the Hands of an all-wise, all-powerful, and all-merciful God; and that we shall most certainly be eternally happy if we please, except we know every precise Mode and Circumstance of this intended Happiness?

Let us then, if we can, give up our prejudiced Conceptions, at least examine our only Authority upon this Point with Purity and Simplicity of Heart. Let us no longer grant

grant to some of our Enemies, what they can never prove; nor supply them with Arms against ourselves, and our Cause. By allowing Men a natural Principle of Life, we do in effect hinder them from *coming to Christ, that they may have Life*: We darken and confound the Scriptures, instead of reducing the Deist to his proper State of *having no Hope* but in the Scriptures; and thereby lead him to look about for something more solid than his own weak Conjectures about an Hereafter, and that false Philosophy on which these Conjectures are built. By these means we may teach him to examine impartially that Covenant which holdeth forth a future Life and Immortality, and assure it to him effectually, thro' the Merits of Jesus Christ. By virtue of this Covenant, we insist, that all Mankind are really and truly mortal; that all are formed of Dust, and shall to Dust return; that the corruptible Materials of Man's Composition, by the necessary Effects of Death, will be entirely dissolved; that every Man will become what he was before his Conception; that he will return to a State of utter Insensibility;

sibility; that he will continue in this State, till the Course of this World shall be finished, and all Mankind are awakened together to a second State of Consciousness, thro' the Merits of Jesus Christ, and thro' Him alone; that Atheist and Deist, Jew and Christian, Mahometan and Pagan, all are upon one common Footing of Mortality; that all shall lie down together, each in his Bed of Insensibility; and that all shall be awakened together to a second Consciousness of all the material Transactions of this present Life.

And as our immortal Life will then be found not to depend upon any natural Principle of Immortality, but to have been obtained entirely by the Mediation of Jesus Christ, and to be a second Creation, effected by his Power; and as the Happiness of that State will also be found to depend upon a Compliance with the Terms which God hath thought proper to propose by him; it followeth, that they only can be admitted to that Happiness, who shall have complied with those Terms, if they have had Opportunity to be acquainted with them. The
Atheist

Atheist therefore, and the Deist, and all they, whosoever they are, who have rejected the Opportunity of becoming Christian, can have no Hope for that Happiness of Immortality, which is entirely founded on the Christian Covenant. This is the Christian's real Glory, and true Crown of Rejoicing: On these Principles, and on these alone, doth our holy Institution stand supreme in Dignity; because there is no Immortality worth wishing for, but that which hath been purchased by the Merits of our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ.

We are informed in the Discourse which gave occasion to these Observations, that the Author's Design, instead of explaining Christianity at large, "is to establish the Doctrine of our Church, concerning an Intermediate State:" Upon which it is to be observed, that this Notion is indeed traditionally received by those who make a Stir about the Word *Orthodoxy*: But that it is a Doctrine of our Church, is not so plain as to be indisputable. The Subject itself seemeth to be in an Intermediate State, but

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not of Sense. It hath gone thro' its lowest Form of Existence, and will, I trust, hereafter rise in its more glorious State. To say Truth, when our good Forefathers were blinded by the Errors of Popery, this Notion of an Intermediate Existence, with other strange things, was ranked amongst the religious Articles: But in the Progress of the Reformation under Queen *Elizabeth*, who proceeded as cautiously as she could, in an Affair that was still to be managed by Compromise, every thing positive, in relation to this Point, was left out of these Articles; for in the Collection under King *Edward*, with regard to Christ's going into Hell, we read, that "his Body lay in the Grave till his Resurrection; but his Soul, being separate from his Body, remained with the Spirits," &c. &c.; which Words, in the Review under Queen *Elizabeth*, were left out. The whole Fortieth Article too, which declared, "That the Souls of Men deceased do neither perish with their Bodies, nor sleep idly," at the same time shared the same Fate.

As to the Catholic Church, there hath been a formal Determination of a Council on one Side, as well as the other. There hath also been a Pope honest enough to declare for no Intermediate State; and his Successor, for fear of the Consequences, was obliged to give a regular Constitution to the contrary. Nor doth that positive Assertion in our Communion Service, of *Christ's lying in Darknes, and the Shadows of Death*, seem to be very consistent with the Notion of his going immediately into Paradise; as this Gentleman laboreth to prove: So that with regard to Church Authority, it is pretty nearly a drawn Battle: And tho' it must be confessed that our Church, with regard to this Subject, as well as Praying for the Dead, its natural Consequence, doth retain a Tang of Popery in her Burial-Service; yet doth she really leave us at full Liberty to debate this important Subject, by striking out of her Articles the only one that directly asserted this unchristian Notion: And indeed if she did not, yet, by the Directions which she hath given in the Sixth of the present Articles,

ticles, to Scripture must we go, by Scripture must we be determined, and by Scripture only.

And surely we are put into a fair Way of finding out the Truth, by a careful Perusal of the Appendix; which containeth the most ample Collection, and giveth the most candid Explanation of the Passages relative to this Point, that hath ever yet been published: And till this be fairly answered, and shewn to be all erroneous, it is a vain Attempt to be peevishly pecking at a few obscure Texts, which are there very satisfactorily explained; but being wrested from their genuine Meaning, can only serve to set the Scripture at Variance with itself.

Let Scripture then alone, according to the Principles of our Reformers, be our Guide; and let the Consequences of scholastic Reasonings, and the philosophical Prejudices of Mankind, answer for themselves.

As to what this Reverend Author saith, about the Notion of Man's Mortality being "maintained by the Socinians, and others,"

I can see nothing in it but an invidious and a disingenuous Insinuation. It is no matter who hath maintained it, if it be true. Let me rather follow the *Socinian* to Truth, than the *Orthodox* to Falshood. Besides, the calling Names, is no kind of Argument; and is the very Method which the real Enemies of Christianity have always taken, when they could do nothing but rail.

In the early Persecutions, Christians were Murderers and Traitors, &c. &c. as may be gathered from *Pliny*, *Tertullian*, *Bobmer*, and others. Under the Reformation, Bishop *Jewel* saith, *Clamant hodie nos esse Hæreticos — tantum quia docemus & profitemur Veritatem, Convitiis, Contumeliis, Mendaciis exagritamur. Sic videlicet semper accepti sunt Auctores & Professores Veritatis.* *Bolingbroke* too, just now, hath jumbled Divines and Atheists together, in such a covert way of Insinuation, that a Stranger would be apt to imagine they were two not unfriendly Sects of the same Religion. And thus *Socinians*, and they who cannot believe an Intermediate State of imperfect Existence, are

are mentioned together in such a manner, that Nine Readers out of Ten will take it for granted, that the latter are, in all respects, the same with the former; than which nothing can be a more groundless Conclusion. Such a Hint, however, will often do a Man's Business; since the Word *Socinian* hath, in some Places, still a marvellous Effect. — *Hunc tu, Romane caveo,*

As to our Saviour's Reply to the Thief, I do not know what others may see in it; but to me it appeareth to be really nothing more than a *present* Promise of *future* Happiness. And we need not stand quibbling about the Words, *To-day*, and what that Expression may or can mean; it is certain, that it may, and doth, frequently signify a future Time; — a Day, too, *which is not near at Hand*; but one which is many Ages off. “In the “*Day* thou eatest thereof,” had reference to a Day at above 900 Years Distance; and surely that could not be called a Day very near at hand. The Word *Paradise* is a Term of so vague Import, was always used so loosely, and in so many different Significations,

fifications, that it hath a very odd Appearance, to build an exprefs Doctrine upon the literal Sense of a Word, obscure in Meaning, and of very different Acceptations, in Contradiction to so many other plain Passages of Scripture, which cannot be controverted.

The penitent Thief requesteth future Happiness; but maketh his Request, under the Influence of *Jewish* Prejudices, that at some distant Time, when Christ should come into his *Kingdom*, he might, in some way or other, be remembered. Our Saviour, knowing his Sincerity, assureth him, that this Happiness is neither so uncertain, nor the Prospect of it so small, as he imagined. Verily I give you Assurance immediately, this very *Moment*, that you shall be very happy in your future State; or, from the Annihilation of Time, by the Cessation of Consciousness, our Saviour might, even with philosophical Propriety, say, *this Day*, this Moment, immediately, you shall be numbered among the Blessed; or, in other Words, as to your own Perceptions you shall be happy directly, upon your Death. Not

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was it any trifling with him, to assure him, that from that Moment he had a certain Title to everlasting Bliss. Besides, according to this Gentleman's own Sense of the Words, *To-day*, could not possibly signify that particular diurnal Rotation of the Earth. So far is it from being true, that by *To-day* " could be meant nothing else but that very " Day in which our Lord and the Thief " expired upon the Cross," that this could not possibly be meant by it; since, according to the Apostles Creed, as well as what we observed above from the Communion Service, our Saviour was not on that particular Day really in Paradise, whatever may be meant by that Expression.

The Explanation of this Passage in the Appendix seemeth to me to be very fair and candid; to be well worthy that most excellent Person who communicated it; and not at all deserving of that contemptuous and abusive Language which hath been bestowed upon it. Besides, by a little Misrepresentation, one may make any thing ridiculous. Try this Gentleman's Method, with

with the same Expression in another Place: *This Day have I begotten thee.* I did not beget thee Yesterday; nor will I beget thee Tomorrow; but *this Day have I begotten thee.* Let us have done then with all this idle Work, which hath more Tendency to prove a bad Heart, than a good Understanding: And let us, if we must differ in Opinion, at least preserve the Civility of well-educated Men, and the Benevolence of sincere Christians.

As to the Expressions, *being gathered to his People; going down to the Grave to my Son; I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me;* they mean nothing more, than that Death reduceth all Men to the same Condition, whatsoever it be. Thus a whole Generation are said to be *gathered to their Fathers*, Judges ii. 10.; tho' we can scarce suppose them all qualified for the same Portion of Felicity. And all the Smartness about "the thing which is not, being gathered to the thing which is not, and nothing going to nothing," is really foreign to the Purpose. The Return of the Spirit to God who gave it, is an Expression of that

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kind, that cannot, by any impartial Man, be taken in a literal Sense, any more than *our Life being hid with Christ*; which nobody supposeth to mean its being literally hid, or laid up, in some secure Place in Heaven. The Parable of *Lazarus* hath been already considered. That Passage of *St. Matthew*, about killing the Body, and not killing the Soul, is fully explained to all impartial Men by *St. Luke*, xii. 4, 5; where killing the Soul doth plainly signify the Punishment in our future State of Existence. *Fear him, who, after he hath killed, hath Power to cast into Hell.* If the Gentleman here, instead of complaining of a violent Hurry in the Author of the Appendix, had himself staid to compare this and the other Text there referred to, with that on which he groundeth the common Doctrine, he might perhaps have seen how very slender such a Proof must be; because, if killing the Soul be a figurative Expression (which, upon his own Supposition, it must be, there being no such thing as killing that which is *naturally* immortal) signifying the Sufferings of the next Life, by all common Modes of Speech,

Speech, and discursive Opposition, killing the Body can only signify what may be suffered in this State; and therefore, according to the Appendix, our Lord is only pointing out the Difference between this Life and the next; when Man will again be conscious, and future Punishments commence.

Into thy Hands I commend my Spirit. Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit. These Expressions, and several others of the like nature, seem to me to convey no other Idea but that of a contented Acquiescence in the Dispensations of Providence; a Resignation of the Principle of Life, with all its present Endearments, into the Hands of that faithful, wise, and good Creator, who first bestowed the Blessing, to be disposed of hereafter according to his Pleasure; under the comfortable Assurance of receiving again, at God's appointed Time, both this Principle, and all its concomitant Blessings, in a very exalted degree of Perfection.—Death, to the most Virtuous and most Considerate, is yet an awful Change. Our rational Enjoyments

are deservedly of great Esteem. The Contemplation of the Wisdom and Goodness of God, the Practice of Virtue, the constant Improvement in every Branch of religious, moral, and natural Science, the ineffable Delights of a Conscience void of Offence, the Principle of Life on which all these Blessings immediately depend; Is this “a vile and worthless Offering?” is this “indeed a very nothing?” A considerate Man will certainly resign all these with Content, and internal Composure, but yet with Seriousness and due Solemnity. The Restoration of them is surely worth a Prayer; and every religious Act tending this way, cannot with Decency be called a “Piece of Mock-worship.”

As to the Passages quoted from St. *Paul*, they all express a most ardent Desire to do and suffer every thing for his Christian Flock; but are really nothing more than that warm and affectionate Turn of Phrase which naturally floweth from a sincere and impassioned Heart. They are all very fairly, and very candidly, explained in the Appendix;

dix; to which I refer the impartial Reader, With regard to the Argumentation upon this Point, "what *St. Paul* might say with "Truth and Propriety," "what he would "not, what he could not, and what he "ought not, to have been desirous of;" I shall only observe, that this prodigious Interval, of so many Ages as are supposed to pass between his Departure and his being with Christ, is really to *St. Paul* but the Twinkling of an Eye, a Moment, a Nothing, no Separation; because the Restoration of Consciousness will immediately connect mortal and immortal Life; and therefore he might rationally wish to depart, rather than continue a Life of such perpetual Persecutions and Afflictions, as he himself informeth us he underwent.

From the Revelations which God Almighty hath been pleased to give us upon this Subject, we have the strongest Reason to conclude, that the Servant and the Master, the Oppressed and the Oppressor, all rest alike in the Grave; High and Low, Rich and Poor, one with another; all shall sleep the Sleep of Death;

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from which Sleep all shall be awakened together at the second Coming of Jesus Christ; then, and not before, to receive the Recompence of their Labors. Now this Gentleman saith, that the Texts alleged in Support of this Opinion, are either nothing to the Purpose, or admit of a fair and easy Solution. He is desired to take a little more Pains in shewing this, instead of putting us off with a mere Assertion, that by the Examination of what is to be said on both Parts, we may be convinced of the Truth. Till this is done, we must be allowed our own Opinions, with regard to that very copious Evidence, which is already produced: And as on this Point we have no proper Authority but the Scriptures, any candid Man will easily see in the Appendix to what Side the Weight of Scripture Evidence is inclined. An impartial Reading, and serious Consideration, is all that is desired; and every-body is then freely left to the Determinations of his own Mind.

With regard to the Pleasures and Pains of this Intermediate State, “that the Righteous

" teous will enjoy in it perfect Peace and
 " Tranquility, the continual Feast of a
 " good Conscience, and a *much greater*
 " *Portion of the Divine Grace*, than is ever
 " enjoyed in this Life; and that the Wicked
 " will be incessantly tormented with the
 " Stings of Conscience, and all the Horrors
 " of Despair;" they seem to me to be
 merely arbitrary Suppositions, and entirely
 inconsistent with the natural Notion of
 Death, with all the improved Opinions of
 Mankind, the Evidence of Sense, and the
 Deductions of Reason. Besides, What is
 to be done with this much greater Portion
 of Divine Grace? Of what Use can any
 Portion of Divine Grace possibly be, where
 there is " no Work, nor Device"; when
 the *Night cometh*, that Night in which no
 Man *can* work? The Passage from our
 Burial Service can only prove, that the Per-
 sons who composed that Office supposed, or
 believed, an Intermediate State of Sensibility;
 but it doth not prove that they were right in
 that Supposition or Belief.

As to those strong Expressions of St. *Paul's*
 Benevolence, we ought not to take them in

a literal Acceptation, because it could never be meant that they should be so understood. It is impossible for a Man, who knoweth what it is, seriously to wish for eternal-Damnation. There is certainly in human Nature an absolute Principle of Free-will: And we may see frequent Instances, when the Enjoyment of this alone is purchased at the Expence of Fortune, Health, and Happiness, and every thing that is valuable in this Life. Men frequently, for the Gratification of their Will, merely because it is their Will, give up every thing for a perverse Election of their own Minds. But I believe it is not in human Nature to carry this Obstinacy farther than the Concerns of this present Life. They who do wilfully hazard eternal Damnation, for this Gratification, either are not convinced that this will certainly be the Consequence of their Conduct, or else have some particular Opinion concerning future Punishments different from the Christian Doctrine upon this Subject. And though *St. Paul* doth say, that he could wish himself accursed from Christ, yet, all Circumstances considered, it must be allowed, that
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this could only be a strong and passionate Expression of his affectionate Regard, implying, that he was willing to forfeit the greatest Privileges, and forego almost any Benefits for them; and was not intended to mean literally, that he wished himself in a State of eternal Damnation.

That common Observation, that “ Man
 “ is a compound Person, made up of Body
 “ and Soul, and that therefore, by a Figure
 “ in Rhetoric, many things may be said of
 “ the whole Man, which properly belong
 “ only to one Part of him,” doth not obviate
 any of the Conclusions drawn from Scripture
 against an Intermediate State. For Scripture,
 tho’ it doth often deal in the boldest Figures
 of Speech, hath little to do with our Systems
 of Metaphysics. By *Man* is meant the
 percipient, conscious Person, from what-
 ever Source Consciousness and Perception
 may be derived. We have learnt all our
 Confusion about Soul and Body from the
 scholastic, ontological Distinctions, and the
 Perplexities built upon them; which are
 enough to turn the Brain of any sober Man;

and are fit Speculations for none but *Milton's* Devils, who, in following them, were in *endless Mazes lost*. “Scholars indeed may reason of the Nature of the Soul, and the Condition of it when separated from the Body; but the common Hopes of Nature receive no Support from such Enquiries*.” Nor is there any Reason for asserting, that the Scripture Affirmations of Death are, by a Synecdoche, applicable to Man only partially; they mean, that his Life, his Personality, whatever constituteth him the percipient, conscious Being, *Man*, is, for the present, intirely gone; as *Mr. Locke* hath fully shewn in his Note on the Words *θνητον, φθαρτον. Cor. i. 15*. Besides, upon Supposition of a natural Principle of Immortality, how can it be said of the whole Man, that he is void of Life, Thought, Action, &c. &c. when the only Part of him, which is ever supposed to live, thinketh in a more perfect manner than when it is clogged with this gross Body; which is only an Instrument, and often a great Impediment, to Thought? Or how can the Body, mere Body, with any Propriety of Speech, according

* *Bishop Sherlock.*

ing to this System, be said to sleep, die, &c. &c.? This will be found, upon Examination, to imply perhaps more than is wished; because it must certainly suppose that Body may wake, live, think, &c. &c.

With regard to the Doctrine of Purgatory, how can this Gentleman say, that it is, upon his Supposition, false and groundless? when he expressly asserteth, that in the Intermediate State there is an *Encrease* of Divine Grace. Besides, do not his tormenting Stings of Conscience, and Horrors of Despair, come to pretty much the same thing? Nay, in this respect, the Papists are much more consistent than we. They insist only upon a natural Conclusion, when the Premises are granted; we allow the Premises, and yet deny the proper Conclusion. Nor is it true, that the Doctrine of Purgatory can be so effectually removed by those Arguments which allow its Foundation, as by those which radically pull it up, and effectually destroy the whole.

This Reverend Author alloweth, that
where there is no Thought, or Consciouſness,
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there can be no Idea of Duration; and consequently, that, upon our Supposition, the Moment of Death, and the Moment of Resurrection, will be immediately connected: And yet, because the *Imaginations* of Men have more Influence upon their Conduct than the real Nature of Things, we must sacrifice Truth to the wild Workings of a distempered Imagination. But should we not rather, both in Reason and Charity, attempt to set their Imaginations right? If these are contrary to the real Nature of Things, and Mens Conduct be formed according to their Imaginations, is it not high time, is it not devoutly to be wished, that their Imaginations were reformed? And not, that Sense, and Reason, and Religion, should either be turned adrift after them, or strained and mangled to comply with their unnatural Distortions. If Religion must always be accommodated to the Imaginations of Men, how can we stop short either of dissolute Licentiousness, or the Superstitions of Idolatry?

Farther, upon Supposition of the immediate Connection of Death and the Resurrection,

rection, what room is there for talking of the Encouragement which a wicked Man might receive to continue in his evil Ways, by *so long a Reprieve* from Punishment? How long a Reprieve? A Reprieve of not a Moment! Of no Time! It is not fair Reasoning then, first to allow the Supposition that the Interval of Death is, to all Intents and Purposes, no Interval, no Time; and yet to argue from it, upon the contradictory Supposition, that it would be so long, that nobody could say how many Thousands of Years.

The Scripture Doctrine of no Intermediate State cutteth off entirely all these vain Hopes. The direct Consequence of this Doctrine is, indeed, as it is termed, a most alarming Consideration. No Distance! No Delay! Death the immediate Introduction to the Presence of God! The Sinner, who dieth in the Commission of an impious Action, must in a Moment appear before his awful Judge, with all the Horrors of his Crime fresh upon him. What Encouragement to Wickedness can this possibly be! But there
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is a Pride in human Nature, or at least in many Men, that will not bear to receive the Gift of God, as he hath been pleased to deliver it. And it is in great measure owing to this unhappy Weakness, that we have so many Disagreements upon those Points, which would easily be settled by a Spirit of Candor and Humility.

Those Intermediate Torments of the Dead,
 “ which shall far exceed the sharpest Pains
 “ of this World; those delightful *Dreams*,
 “ which are not to be equalled by the most
 “ agreeable Sensations of our waking Mo-
 “ ments;” they necessarily imply such direct
 Circumstances of Life and Perception, as
 cannot possibly be reconciled with our
 natural Ideas of Death; nor with the Scrip-
 tural Representation of Rest, Peace, Oblivion,
 &c. &c. And they seem to be nothing more
 than ingenious and poetical Conjectures,
 upon a Subject which hath not been properly
 examined, and whose Support may perhaps
 be found, upon Examination, to be very
 defective.

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Upon the Supposition of no Intermediate State, it is very certain, that Judgment lingreth not; that Damnation doth not slumber; that it is very near to the Sinner, even at his Door: Which cannot be said truly of the opposite Doctrine, which doth certainly remove it to the Distance of “no-
 “body knows how many Thousands of
 “Years.” May all Men then, from the Doctrine of no Intermediate State, be armed, against the Pleasures of Life, and the Pains of Death; being inspired even to their latest Moments with the lively Hope of immediately receiving the full Harvest of their Reward. As to their receiving, before the Resurrection, “the First-fruits of their
 “Labours,” I do not know in what Part of the Scripture that Text is to be found.

The Reverend Author of the Discourse which hath occasioned this small Tract, will excuse me for taking the same Liberty which he himself hath taken, and which is the Right of all Mankind; the Liberty to think for myself; tho’ I happen to differ from him: And as I have no sort of Enmity against him, I hope he will not be angry with

with me, for being of a contrary Opinion. It is of much more Consequence to the Welfare, and even to the Support, of Christianity, than is generally imagined, that this Question should be fairly decided. And one of the chief Views in publishing these few Pages, is to desire, that antient Prejudices may not be too peremptorily insisted on, till their Foundation is candidly examined; that all Spirit of Party, and every uncharitable Emotion, may be suppressed; that, like the honest *Bereans*, we may freely search the Scriptures, our only Authority, upon this Point; and impartially examine, whether these Things are so. It is also sincerely hoped, that the Merits of the Cause will not be determined by this weak and imperfect Attempt to defend it; since it was not the Author's Intent to write a regular Treatise upon the Subject, as he knew himself not properly qualified for the Undertaking; but must leave that Office to be executed by some very worthy Persons, who will at length do it ample Justice.

F I N I S.

ERRATUM. — P. 39. l. 10. for lead, read leading.

